Blanchette et les Sept Petits Cajuns A Cajun Snow White



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A Cajun Snow White

By Sheila Hébert-Collins
Illustrated by Patrick Soper

"Black as *nuit* her hair does flow, lips *très rouge*, and skin like snow. *Blanchette* is the fairest I know, as far as the bayous flow."

Imagine how shocked the evil voodoo queen Marie Gaudet is to learn that she is no longer the fairest in the Honey Island Swamp! So begins this Cajun retelling of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Lured from her home at Armand Plantation, Blanchette wanders the dangerous swamp until she is rescued by seven little Cajuns named Hébert, Mouton, Trahan, Broussard, Hollier, Comeaux, and Préjean.

This is the fifth collaboration by the author and illustrator of 'T Pousette et 'T Poulette: A Cajun Hansel and Gretel, Cendrillon: A Cajun Cinderella, Jolie Blonde and the Three Héberts: A Cajun Twist to an Old Tale, and Les Trois Cochons. Children will love following Blanchette's adventures; and the whole family will enjoy a recipe for delicious jambalaya, just like Blanchette prepares for the seven little Cajuns!





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In loving memory of Anthony ("Tony") McLin

Special thanks to Angie McMorris Cornett and her eighth-grade class of 2000 at Frost Elementary in Livingston Parish, Louisiana, for their contributions to this story. Never forget your Cajun roots and continue to write with Cajun pride!

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Summary: A Cajun version of Snow White that features a vain voodoo queen, seven little Cajuns living in a cypress tree, and a handsome plantation owner. Includes pronunciations and translations of Cajun words and a recipe for Blanchette's Chicken and Sausage Jambalaya. ISBN 1-56554-912-0 (alk. paper)

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BLANCHETTE ET LES SEPT PETITS CAJUNS A Cajun Snow White

Once upon a time in the Louisiana swamplands, there lived a woman known for her voodoo powers, *Marie Gaudet*. She lived in a cypress hut deep in Honey Island Swamp, where many visited her everyday for some of her *gris gris*.





Everyday Marie would gather the secret ingredients to make the magic potion that kept her young and beautiful: two possum feet, an egret beak, a frog tongue, and eyes of a moccasin. She'd cook it up, drink a cup, then walk over to the murky waters of Honey Island Swamp and say, "Bayou, bayou, hear my plea. Who's the fairest maiden in the land of the cypress tree?"



But on a day that *Marie Gaudet* will never forget, the murky waters spoke of her worst fear:

"Black as *nuit* her hair does flow, lips *très rouge*, and skin like snow. *Blanchette* is the fairest I know, as far as the bayous flow."

nuit (nwee) nighttrès rouge (tray rooj) very redBlanchette (blôn shet) "blanche"=French for white



Marie screamed her most terrible scream, called all her creatures of the swamp, and commanded, "Find this Blanchette and lead her into my swamp to die." The creatures searched all the plantations around Honey Island Swamp.

Finally, they came upon Armand Plantation, where they found Blanchette. With the help of Marie's gris gris, the swamp creatures lured her deep into the swamp where she could never find her way home. They all rushed back to Marie to tell her of Blanchette's fate.



Pauvre bête, Blanchette wandered about the dark swamp, knowing she would soon be eaten up by swamp creatures, but they all were entranced by her beauty. They only wanted to help her and led her to Cypress Cove, to a large cypress tree covered with moss. Hidden beneath the moss was a little door. Blanchette opened the door and found a cute little home. There was a petite table à manger made from a cypress stump, with seven little cypress knees for chairs. La table was piled high with dirty gumbo bowls and the sink piled high with pots. Her first thought was to clean up, so these bien petite people would let her faire la veillée.



pauvre bête (poov bet) poor thing
petite table à manger (p'teet tahb ah môn jhay) little dining table
la table (lah tahb) the table
bien petite (bee yehn p'teet) very little
faire la veillée (fair lah vay yay) stay late into the night





After cleaning, Blanchette was bien fatigué, so she looked around for a bed to faire dodo. She found sept petits moss beds, each one with a name carved on top. There was one for Hébert, Mouton, Trahan, Broussard, Hollier, Comeaux, and Préjean.

"Surely these cute little Cajuns will welcome me into their home," she thought. She snuggled into *Préjean's* bed and fell asleep.

bien fatigué (bee yehn fah tee gay) very tired faire dodo (fair doedoe) go to sleep sept (set) seven petit (p'teet) small Hébert (A bear), Mouton (Moo tôn), Trahan (Trôn hôn), Broussard (Broo sard), Hollier (Ohl yay), Comeaux (Koe moe), Préjean (Pray zhôn) French names

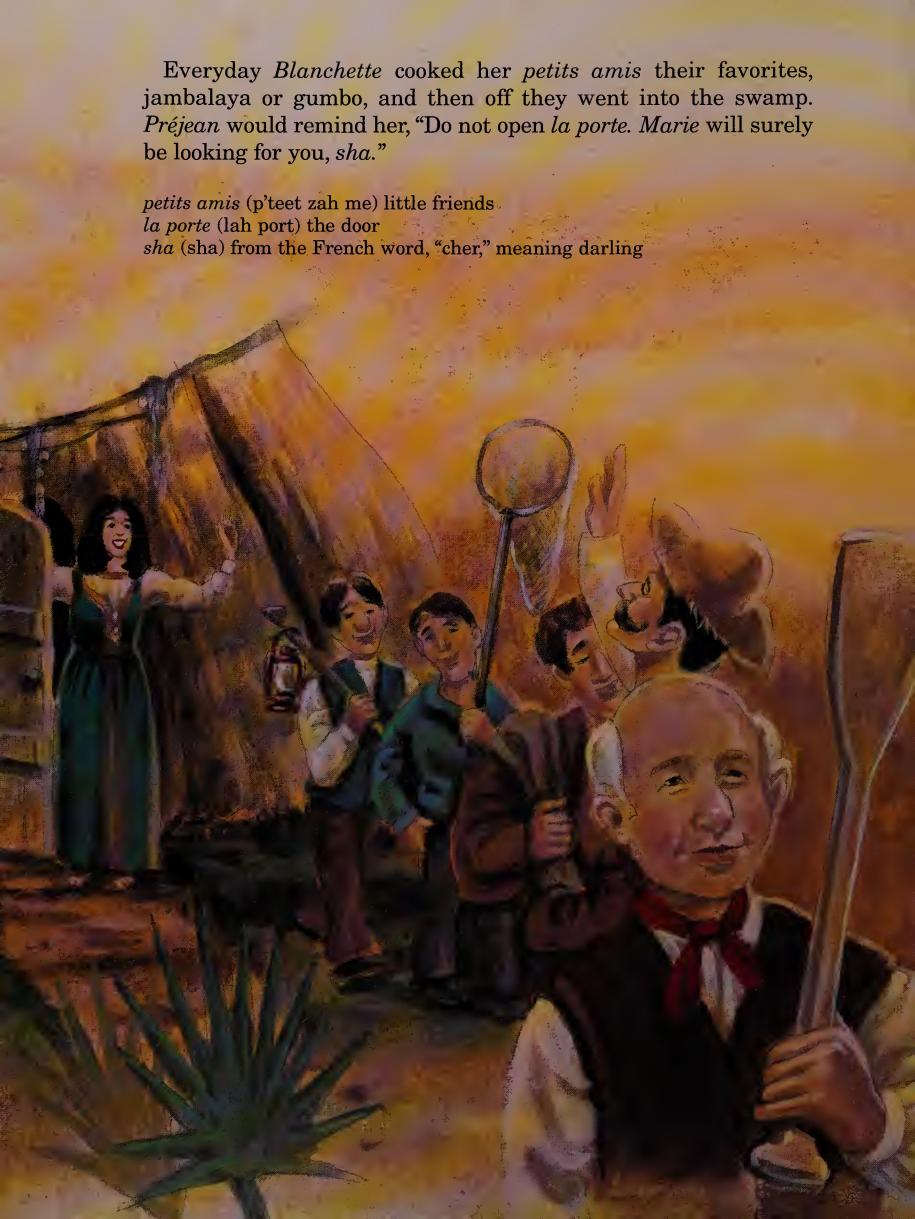
De bon matin, the sept petits Cajuns came home from their night of hunting gators. They were surprised to see their home neat and tidy. They washed up, ate some good, fried alligator, then headed for bed. When *Préjean* saw *Blanchette*, he called to his friends. They all watched as she slept.

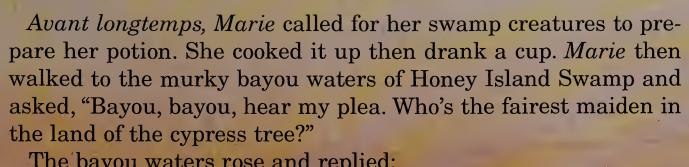


When *Blanchette* awoke, she told the little Cajuns how she came to be there. *Les petits* Cajuns agreed that *Marie Gaudet* must be at the bottom of this and begged *Blanchette* to stay with them forever so they could protect her. *Blanchette* agreed.

de bon matin (der bôn mah tehn) early in the morning







The bayou waters rose and replied:

"Marie, Marie, you are fair, but no, no. Blanchette is the fairest as far as the bayous flow. With sept petits Cajuns she will be, living in Cypress Cove in a cypress tree."





Again, *Marie* screamed her most terrible scream and called for her swamp creatures. "Prepare my potion," she commanded. "I will fix that *Blanchette* myself." Two possum feet, an egret beak, a frog tongue, and eyes from a moccasin . . . but this time *Marie* added a spell. "Potion, potion, that I need, disguise me for my evil deed." *Marie* drank the potion and was transformed into an old Cajun maw-maw. "Now, I will make a batch of poison *beignets* that no one can resist."





Marie's swamp creatures led her to the moss-covered cypress tree. She knocked à la porte then called out, "Bonsoir, mes petits amis. I live nearby and brought by a batch of beignets." Blanchette called out that she could not open la porte but she would surely love to have some beignets. So Marie put them on the window ledge and left, feeling sure that the beignets would be eaten.

Bonsoir, mes petits amis. (Bôn swah, may p'teet zah me.) Good evening, my little friends. Sure enough, *Blanchette* quickly bit into those delicious *beignets*, and fell to the floor, lifeless.





When *les petits* Cajuns came home from their gator hunt, they found *Blanchette*, lifeless. They watched her and cried for three days. Finally, *Préjean* said, "*Mon dieu*, she is still so beautiful. We can certainly not bury her in that cold ground. Let's build a glass box for her and keep it beneath her favorite magnolia tree." And it was done. They visited her everyday.

mon dieu (môn dyu) my goodness







Les sept petits Cajuns helped lift the glass box into Monsieur Cossé's pirogue, and as they did, a piece of poison beignet fell out of Blanchette's mouth. Blanchette awoke! Les petits Cajuns opened the glass box and Blanchette stood up slowly, then asked, "Mais, quoi qu'est arrivé?"

Les petits Cajuns told Blanchette what had happened and that they felt sure it was Marie's evil doing.



Suddenly, *Monsieur Cossé* fell to his knees and said, "Marry me and I will protect you forever."

Blanchette fell instantly in love. She kissed les petits Cajuns au revoir and promised to come back to faire la veillée.

au revoir (oh rev wah) good-bye



Marie had heard about André Cossé's wedding. She was determined to attend the wedding of the richest plantation owner in all of Cypress Cove to see for herself if his bride was beautiful. So she prepared a special potion to make her even more beautiful: four possum feet, two egret beaks, a nutria tongue, and eyes of moccasin. She cooked it up and drank a cup. She walked to the murky bayou waters and once more asked, "Bayou, bayou, hear my plea. Who is the fairest maiden in the land of the cypress tree?"

The bayou waters rose and replied:

"Black as *nuit*, her hair does flow, lips *très rouge*, and skin like snow. *Blanchette*, the bride of *André Cossé*, is the fairest maiden I know, as far as the bayous flow."

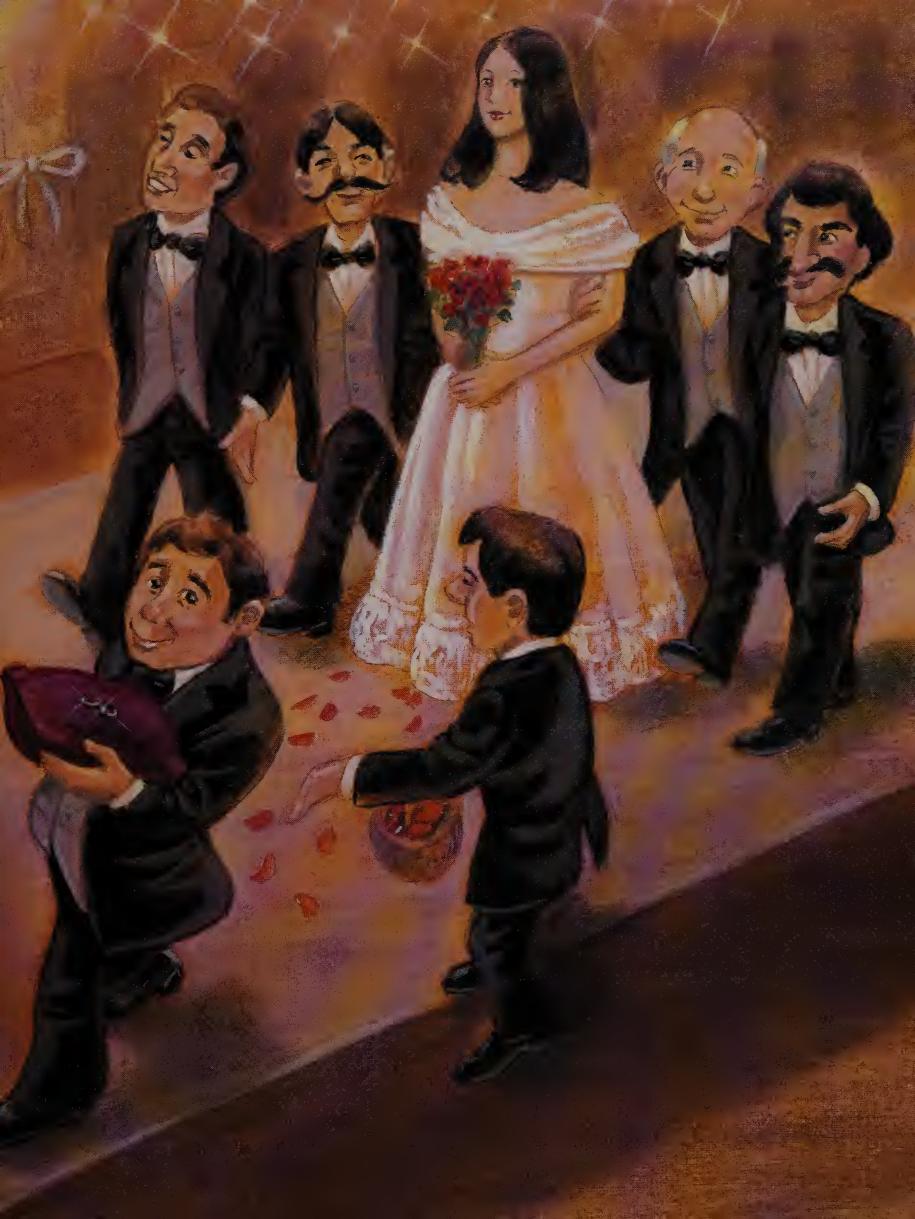




Blanchette married André Cossé that very day. Les petits Cajuns walked Blanchette down the aisle. Blanchette and André lived happily ever after, deep in Honey Island Swamp, where her petite enfants could see their sept petits parrains every day.

C'est tout!

petite enfants (p'teet on fôn) little children parrains (pah rehn) godfathers C'est tout! (Say too!) That's all!



BLANCHETTE'S CHICKEN-AND-SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

Origin of Jambalaya: Legend tells of how a well-to-do guest arrived late at a New Orleans inn, wanting dinner. The proprietor turned to his chef and said, "Jean, balayez," meaning "blend some good things together." The guest was delighted with the results and asked what it was called. The proprietor said, "Jean, balayez." From then on, many ordered "Jean, balayez." In time, the words were run together and became known as Jambalaya.

2 lbs. deboned chicken pieces

1 lb. smoked pork sausage, sliced

¼ cup oil

1 tsp. Tony's Creole Seasoning

2 tsp. salt

2 celery ribs, chopped

½ cup bell pepper, chopped

2 garlic cloves, chopped

1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce

2 tbsp. parsley, chopped

2 tbsp. green-onion tops, chopped

4 cups rice, cooked

2 large onions, chopped

Directions: Heat oil in a large, thick pot on medium-high heat. Add chicken, brown, and cook 20 minutes. Add sausage, seasoning, and salt. Cover and cook on low heat for 30 minutes. Remove sausage and chicken. Add onion, celery, bell pepper, and garlic and sauté until tender. Stir in tomato sauce and return chicken and sausage to the pot. Cover and simmer about 10 minutes. Add onion tops and parsley and cook covered for 5 minutes. Fold in cooked rice and simmer about 10 minutes. Serve with French bread and coleslaw. *Bon appétit!*









Sheila Hébert-Collins, a native of Abbeville, Louisiana, has enormous pride in her Cajun heritage. Listed on the Louisiana State Artist Roster as an author and Cajun storyteller, she often makes appearances in schools throughout the state. Her other books are 'T Pousette et 'T Poulette: A Cajun Hansel and Gretel, Cendrillon: A Cajun Cinderella, Jolie Blonde and the Three Héberts, Les Trois Cochons, and Petite Rouge: A Cajun Twist to an Old Tale, all published by Pelican.

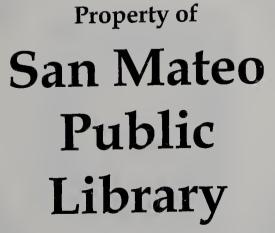
Award-winning artist Patrick Soper lives in Lafayette, Louisiana. He has also illustrated Cajun Folktales, Contes Populaires Cadiens, Mardi Gras in the Country, and A Christmas Dictionary, all published by Pelican.



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